



PHOTOS BY DAN HOLTMEYER

Asma Mohammed of Minneapolis leads a chant among a crowd supporting Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minnesota, and opposing President Donald Trump before the president arrived in Burnsville on Monday, April 15. “I’m here to support my sister,” she said, adding she believes Omar has been targeted by Trump because she’s a black Muslim woman.

TRUMP

► continued from 1

corruption among liberals. Kathryn Lovelace, also of Maple Grove, said the country is in a better place because of Trump’s support

for Israel, police and the military, his party’s tax cuts and his plan to build a southern border wall. Protesters, meanwhile, carried a thicket of “Stand with Ilhan” signs, referring to U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minnesota. Omar, a Muslim Somali refugee, was this month accused by Trump and other conservatives of making light of the Sept. 11 attacks. The representative has said her words are taken out of context and she receives daily death threats because



Supporters of President Donald Trump confront protesters during his Burnsville visit on Monday, April 15. The event grew more disorganized and confrontational after Trump’s arrival for an economic roundtable.

Trump encourages extremists. The Muslim relations organization called on community members to rally in Burnsville during the visit in support of Omar. “I want her to be respected as a congresswoman,” said Habon Abdulle, who

immigrated from Somalia two decades ago and voted for Omar. “We are all American. We choose the United States of America as our country,” she said. “I want to have a president who represents all of us, not just a few.”

Nancy Davis-Ortiz, a retired Army lieutenant colonel from Minneapolis, said she was ashamed of Trump’s actions related to minorities, limiting immigration and pushing to remove health coverage protections.

“It’s just chipping away any way he can,” she said.

Several of Minnesota’s Democrat representatives viewed the visit as a gearing up for the 2020 presidential campaign — a sign that Minnesota could be targeted as a battleground between Republicans and Democrats.

Freshman Sen. Tina Smith tweeted Trump’s visit to the state was “a signal to his wealthy donors & super PACs that MN is the place to attack.” Smith called on constituents to donate to her office in response. The senator later tweeted that the president could “stand to learn a few of (Minnesota’s) values.”

Sen. Amy Klobuchar highlighted her campaign for the presidency, chastising the president’s tax cuts to the wealthy and saying she would have used the lost revenue to rebuild the nation’s infrastructure.

Law enforcement officers from throughout Dakota County corralled the opposing crowds, which largely stayed separate until Trump’s arrival. The rally and protest became more disorganized and confrontational afterward, with small groups shouting at each other and occasionally veering close to physical fights.

Several Trump supporters referenced far-right conspiracy theories, asking protesters if they had been

paid to come, for example. Others sang patriotic songs.

Protesters, on the other hand, chanted that immigrants are welcome and demanded that Trump make his tax returns and income public.

Inside Nuss, Trump said around 7,500 new jobs have been created in mining, logging and construction industries in the state and unemployment is down to 3.1 percent. He also praised the reopening of mining operations at the Super National Forest in the Arrowhead, which he said former President Barack Obama “ripped away” from Iron Range communities that depend on copper-nickel mining.

Nuss also hosted former Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan last year during a visit to tout the tax changes. Congressman Jim Hagedorn, a Republican who represents Minnesota’s First District spanning southern parts of the state, joined Trump during his stop.

“President Trump’s visit to meet with the hardworking men and women of small business shows the administration’s commitment to strengthening our economy with tax and regulatory relief,” Hagedorn said in a statement.

Tom Landwehr, executive director of a campaign to protect the boundary waters from pollution, later issued a statement rebuffing Trump’s description of the mining operation.

“Donald Trump is selling out Minnesota and the Boundary Waters Wilderness to a foreign mining corporation — plain and simple,” he said. “The fact that Trump’s administration is short-cutting the regulatory process, concealing scientific information, and unlawfully granting mineral rights to a mining boss who was also his daughter’s landlord is outrageous.”

Meg Britton-Mehlisch contributed to this report.

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